

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 12/15/2015	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Lisa Howe/ 781-5011	
(4) SUBJECT Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S)	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____ ) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ____ )			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> N/A    Date: <u>3/11/14, 4/8/14, 5/6/14, 6/3/14, 6/17/14, 7/15/14, 8/12/14, 9/9/14, 10/7/14, 11/4/14, 12/2/14, 12/16/14, 1/6/15, 2/3/15, 2/24/15, 3/24/15, 4/21/15, 5/19/15, 6/16/15, 7/14/15, 8/11/15, 9/1/15, 9/22/15, 10/20/15, and 11/17/15</u>	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW This item was prepared by the Administrative Office.			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts.			

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Administrative Office / Lisa Howe/ 781-5011

DATE: 12/15/2015

SUBJECT: Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

On March 11, 2014, the Board adopted a resolution proclaiming a local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Section 8630 of the California Government Code and County Code Chapter 2.80.070 (2) require that the Board of Supervisors review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 30 days until such emergency is terminated. The Board also directed staff to return every 30 days to provide an update on the status of actions by the Drought Task Force, including a report on the analysis regarding local water conditions, local responses, conservation and outreach projects, and the State Water Project.

The last drought update was on November 17, 2015. Previous thirty-day updates are available at the following link: [http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought\\_Update/County\\_Drought\\_Updates.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update/County_Drought_Updates.htm).

The Drought Task Force continues to meet regularly to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, responses to emergency health and safety, and public communication and outreach. The Drought Task Force prepared the Monthly Drought Update (Attachment 1) to inform the Board on current drought conditions and related management actions. Current drought conditions confirm the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency. Provided below is a summary of the current conditions and conservation and response efforts.

### **Current Conditions**

Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released December 3, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 92% of California is at a level D2 Severe Drought or worse with 45% of the state at a D4 intensity level.

See Attachment 3 for County rainfall totals for the 2015-16 water year (July 2015 – June 2016). Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 18% (68,370 acre feet); Whale Rock 36% (14,031 acre feet); Lopez 29% (14,320 acre feet); and Salinas 13% (3,006 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

### **Outlook**

An El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Advisory continues in effect. Most models indicate that a strong El Niño will continue through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2015-16, followed by weakening and a transition to ENSO-neutral

during the late spring or early summer. Due to the strongly positive ENSO signal in place, “rainy season” across California may finally live up to its name. A strong subtropical jetstream may take aim at Southern California, in particular, as was the case during the strong El Niño of 1997. That year was noted not only for the high number of storms, but also for their strength. South aspects bore the brunt of the strongest storms which brought flooding and mud and debris flows to much of the central coast and

Southern California. Hillsides and lower elevations may be even more prone to flooding this year due to the poor condition of many fuels beds. Heavy, dead fuel components covering the steeper terrain will be less effective in stabilizing hillsides.

Although the southern jetstream and associated storm track that are characteristic of El Niño winters are expected to bring some improvement of drought conditions to California, given the severity and longevity of the drought, it is unlikely to completely alleviate precipitation deficits and replenish reservoirs in just one season. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to remain but improve throughout California if El Niño delivers rain as predicted.

## **Impacts**

### Agricultural Conditions

Agricultural conditions continue to deteriorate due to lack of moisture. The timing of recent rainfall was beneficial for rangeland conditions. Concern about the prediction of an El Niño weather condition which may bring abundant rain to the central coast is high as this may cause soil erosion, and damage to culverts and roads. An El Niño weather pattern is also alarming for managers of deteriorated rangeland areas, with potential impacts dependent on the severity of the predicted El Niño. Producers are in a wait-and-see pattern, with a close eye on weather predictions.

### Fire Conditions

The County-wide burn ban was rescinded on November 15, 2015. The backyard burn season indicates that burning may be conducted according to the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) burn program with no requirement for CAL FIRE burn permits. On Monday December 7, 2015, CAL FIRE will initiate the first phase of the transition to “winter preparedness” staffing levels. CAL FIRE will reduce engine staffing from twelve (12) wildland engines to seven (7). With the transition to winter preparedness season, the annual backyard burn season will begin on December 7, 2015.

### Hazardous Trees

Widespread tree mortality is plainly evident throughout the County. All tree species have been adversely affected by the drought. The area most severely impacted is the Cambria Monterey Pine Forest (CMPF). The eucalyptus stands on the Nipomo mesa are also showing a sharp increase in the number of dead trees and in the number of live trees with dead crowns. The epidemic levels of tree die-off create a serious fire and safety hazard and, even if the County receives normal or above rainfall this winter, dead trees will continue to pose major threats to public safety. A number of local agencies have been working together to address the threat. However, the tree situation is not beyond the local resource capacity and state assistance is needed. The County is coordinating with the state to help address the issue of tree mortality and secure the necessary resources to help this growing problem.

CAL FIRE has created a web-based map viewer to allow Californians to participate in understanding and identifying the areas most impacted with tree mortality as a threat to life and property. This viewer shows areas of tree mortality mapped from 2012 through 2015 as well as assets important to life and property, such as roads, water supply infrastructure, and communications facilities. Where the tree mortality intersect an asset will be categorized as high priority. The viewer can be accessed at the following link: <http://frap.fire.ca.gov/projects/DroughtViewer>.

### Dry Well Reports

The Governor’s Drought Task Force created an online intake form for local, state, or tribal and federal agencies to document domestic water issues. The information is intended to inform and coordinate state response and mitigate drought impacts. Both agencies and individuals can complete the reporting form. Individuals with domestic water issues are encouraged to contact County Environmental Health at (805) 781-5544 or visit the state online reporting website at <https://mydrywatersupply.water.ca.gov/report/>.

### Economic Conditions

The Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) and the Employment Development Department (EDD) created a streamlined survey to report drought-related job impacts. A link to the survey is available on the San Luis Obispo Workforce Investment Board’s (WIB) website: [www.SLOWorkforce.com](http://www.SLOWorkforce.com). Though the WIB is hearing that there are impacts, the County does not have any “reportable” impacts due to the State’s requirements for reporting (i.e. specific business name, address, etc.).

The County continues to identify assistance programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions. Information regarding drought assistance for rural homeowners has been placed on the County Drought Conditions and Water Conservation webpage. Rural Development, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), delivers a number of programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions.

### **State Actions**

#### Governor Brown Issued Executive Order Intensifying State's Drought Response

On November 13, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order that calls for additional actions to build on the state's ongoing response to record dry conditions and assist recovery efforts from this year's devastating wildfires. The Executive Order also intensifies the State's drought response by extending emergency conservation regulations through October 2016, if drought persists through January, and streamlines project permitting that seek to capture stormwater from high precipitation events. The proclamation also directs \$5 million from the 2015 state budget to the State Water Board to help secure safe drinking water for small water systems.

### **County Facilities Usage and Conservation Actions**

#### Water Conservation

Water usage data for all facilities with water billing from a vendor has been entered into the Utility Manager system. Water usage status updates for the users in the Utility Manager system and the County Operations Center show a 31% reduction countywide in water usage in October 2015 from October 2013.

### **Emergency Response Planning and Emergency Actions**

#### County Office of Emergency Services

San Luis Obispo County OES continues to coordinate with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide updates on the drought situation, respond to specific information requests to Cal OES, and coordinate local emergency needs. County OES continues to participate in the statewide drought conference calls hosted by Cal OES. County OES continues to pursue information related to how the resulting Governor's orders will be implemented. Cal OES Disaster Recovery Branch is working to create an FAQ document and a funding matrix. County OES will continue to follow up with Cal OES on this issue. During the November 16 conference call, County OES shared our local concerns and issues related to regulatory challenges to getting waterways and other areas cleared of vegetation.

#### Contingency Planning

The Public Health Department, the Public Works Department, and CAL FIRE/County Fire continue to develop plans to ensure there is adequate supply of water for firefighting and domestic water use in the event that a community does not have enough water. Water availability information from public water systems has been categorized into three categories; Watch, Vulnerable, and Critical. The information has been placed into a GIS mapping layer for contingency planning. These maps are available on all the County Fire Departments mobile data computers. During a fire, the fire commanders can use these maps to identify which water sources are reliable and draw down systems that are vulnerable.

#### Emergency Actions

The proclamation continues to provide authority for unforeseen needed actions. As also noted, proclamation provides a statement to State and Federal agencies of the seriousness of the County's situation.

The County has taken no new emergency actions specific to the drought in this reporting period.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Board review and receive the attached update. The update highlights the existence of continuing drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Review of this update by the Board fulfills the Board's duty to review the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency due to the existence of drought conditions pursuant to Government Code section 8630. No other Board action is necessary.

Note: Any regulations issued because of the local drought emergency would be subject to Board approval. The local emergency proclamation adopted by the Board on March 11, 2014, will remain in effect until terminated by your Board.

## **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

At the onset of the Governor's declaration and under the direction of the County Administrative Officer, a County Drought Task Force was formed. The Drought Task Force is comprised of multiple County departments, including: the Administrative Office, Office of Emergency Services, Public Works Department, County Parks and Recreation, County Fire (CAL FIRE), Agricultural Commissioner, Planning and Building, Farm Advisor, Health Agency, County Counsel, and First District Supervisor Frank Mecham. All member departments provided input for this report.

County OES continues to be in in regular contact with Cal OES to receive and provide situation status information.

The Public Works Department continues to coordinate with local water purveyors and cities.

Public Health is coordinating with relevant State agencies, including the State California Department of Public Health and Emergency Medical Services Authority Health Coordination Center.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The long-term financial impact on the local economy, including the demand on County and other legal agency services, cannot be forecast at this time. The County continues to track drought-related costs. As of December 3, 2015, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$374,472.

## **RESULTS**

Accepting the update prepared by the Drought Task Force, which establishes the existence of conditions of drought, confirms the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency. Maintaining the proclamation of local emergency will continue to allow for the Public Works Department and other agencies to take immediate actions needed by allowing temporary reduction of certain regulatory and purchasing requirements. This will also permit County staff to assist in drought-related work and tasks outside their normal scope of duties in the capacity of Disaster Service Workers under Government Code section 3100. In addition, acceptance of the update from the Drought Task Force confirms the continuing existence of severe drought conditions and will also serve as notice to the State of our dire conditions and a reminder to all of the serious drought conditions facing the County and State.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Attachment 1 – Monthly Drought Update
2. Attachment 2 – U.S. Drought Monitor Map
3. Attachment 3 – Rainfall and Reservoir Data
4. Attachment 4 – Local Reservoir Conditions
5. Attachment 5 – U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook